

Bridges Out of Poverty

Initial evaluation of workshop for agency staff

Introduction

The aim of this initial evaluation is to explore the impact of the pilot programme on staff and their organisations of the pilot of the Bridges Out of Poverty workshops.

Bridges Out of Poverty is an approach to developing the capacity of organisations and their staff to work with local people who are experiencing poverty and lack of opportunity. It takes a personal development approach to learning, aimed at ensuring that local people are listened to in their own terms, and that agencies do not, through their own in-built assumptions, create barriers to real engagement with individuals.

The pilot programme was run in Govan during February 2014, with 9 participants from statutory and community-based organisations active in the area.

Methods

The evaluation has applied the principles of Social Return on Investment (SROI) in exploring how the programme has created value for the participants and the organisations they work for. The author is an Accredited SROI Practitioner. No charge was made for the pilot course, and one of the aims of this evaluation is to understand what the returns might be for staff and organisations undertaking the programme in future. The principles of SROI are:

- Involve stakeholders
- Understand change
- Value what matters
- Include only what is material
- Do not overclaim
- Be transparent
- Verify the result.

The resulting analysis is not a full SROI but an estimate, but has used the responses to personal interviews to understand the impact of the programme in the short-term. Participants were interviewed by telephone for approx. 30 minutes using a script attached to this report as an appendix. 5 participants responded to the request for an interview. A further 3 responded by email and the analysis has been based on all these responses. Interviews were conducted in March and April 2014.

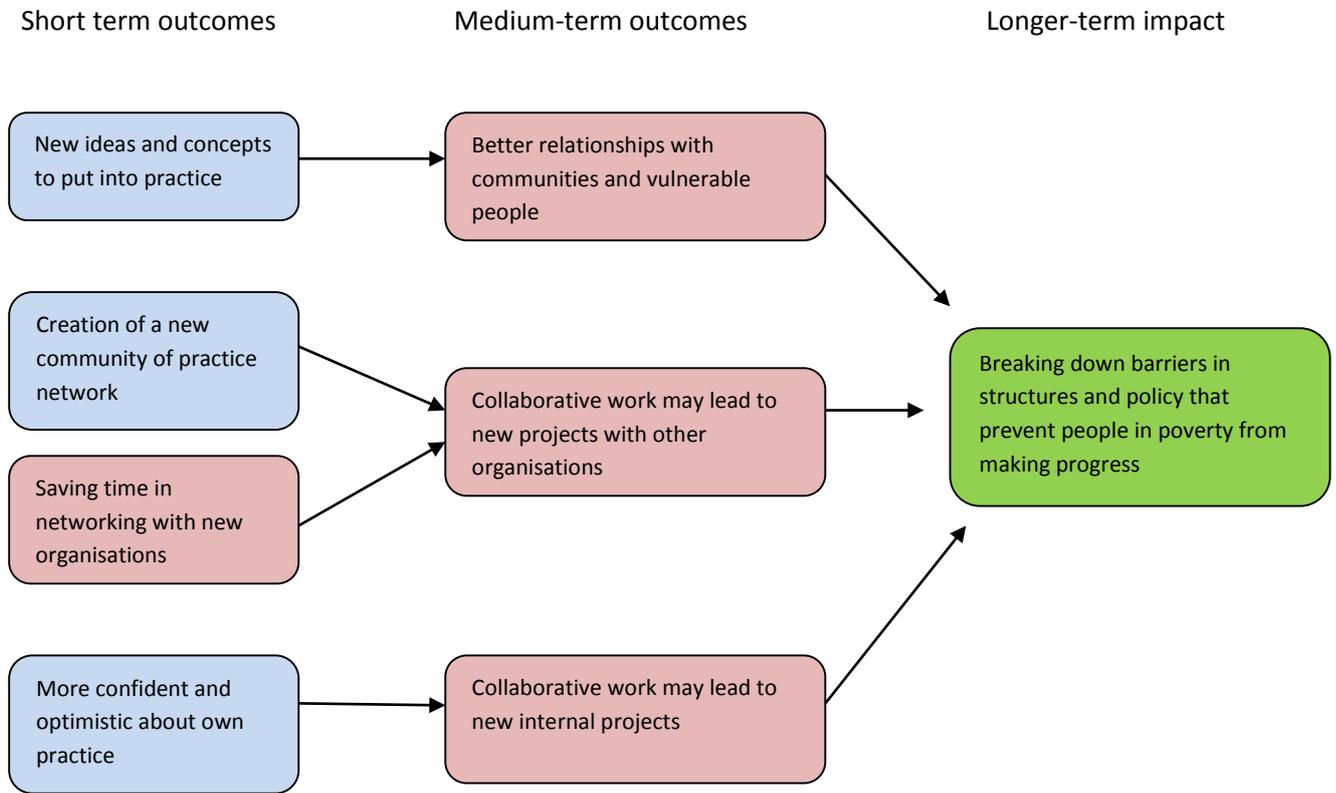
The programme manager for Bridges Out of Poverty has designed a full evaluation strategy to follow up participants over the coming year, so that the longer-term impact of the programme can be captured, and a fuller SROI analysis will be undertaken as part of this strategy.

Findings

Even though the programme was a relatively short intervention of 3 days worth of workshops, the participants reported immediate outcomes for them, and some indication of outcomes for their organisation. These were the two stakeholder groups included in the SROI analysis.

Some participants had engaged in the past with similar programmes, and 3 of them had a familiarity with the principles and models used in Bridges Out of Poverty. Nevertheless, all participants reported outcomes for themselves, and that the programme had an impact on their thinking, their networks and in some cases, their plans for future work.

It was possible to construct a likely logic model for outcomes, based on what participants reported:



(Boxes in blue are outcomes for participants, pink is for organisations and green is 'the community' as a stakeholder)

SROI results

Based on the 8 participant responses and the identified short to medium term outcomes, the SROI analysis estimated that if the programme is charged for, the likely return for the organisations investing in the programme in future is over £4 for each £1 invested. How this ratio was arrived at is contained in appendix 2.

If the outcomes last beyond the next year, then the ratio rises to over £6 for every £1 invested.

Conclusion

The initial evaluation of the impact of the Bridges Out of Poverty programme demonstrates an estimated healthy return for participating staff and organisations, and this is only likely to rise if the community of practice network established by the first group of participants continues and strengthens its work, and if other such networks arise as the programme rolls out.

Sheila Durie
Haldane Associates

Appendix 1
Interview script

Staff member:.....

Organisation.....

1. What has changed for you as a result of the Bridges workshops? Personal and professional outcomes
2. What do you think the longer term impact might be on your practice?
3. How much of what you learnt in the workshops has been used in your organisation or might be used in future?
4. How much of any change might you have achieved by other means, and what would these be/have been?
5. Is anyone else involved in the outcomes you have reported e.g. other staff; clients
6. Can you think of another type of course/training/workshop that has given you the same opportunity as the Bridges workshop – or can you think of another way to value the impact the programme has had on you?
7. Any negatives from involvement in the workshops?
8. Any other comments/areas of value for you in participating

Appendix 2 SROI Impact Map

Stakeholders	Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes						Deadweight	Attribution	Impact
			Description	Indicator	Quantity	Financial proxy	Value	Source			
Participants	Time	3 day course	New ideas and concepts to improve practice	Number of participants reporting their thinking has been changed	5	Value of a course in youth justice practice	£775	OU 'Foundations in effective youth justice practice' at http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/course/K115.htm	25%	5%	£2,760.94
			Wider knowledge of people working in the same field leads to creation of a new community of practice network	Number of participants who attended a follow up meeting and who intend to continue meeting as a practice group	8	Individual membership of a community of practice organisation	£125	Associate membership fee of Locality, at http://locality.org.uk/members/join/cost/	0%	5%	£950.00
			More confidence in own practice and more optimistic	Number of participants reporting they will put the new ideas into practice	5	Employing a mentor/life coach at £60 per hour to give the equivalent impact	£1,200	Course input was for 18 hours, plus 2 hours follow up, £60 per hour from Global Value Exchange database	15%	5%	£4,845.00
Organisations	£275 times 9	3 day course	Saving time to network with other agencies	Number of participants new in post who reported the course had saved them time in meeting people in other agencies	1	Estimate of £15 per hour for staff time	£300	Course input was for 18 hours, plus 2 hours follow up	0%	5%	£285.00
			Collaborative work may lead to new projects with the other organisations	Number of participants who intend to use the course knowledge and develop new projects	2	Estimated cost of employing a fundraiser for 1 day to write an application	£350	Cost estimated at lower end of consultancy day rate	15%	5%	£565.25
			Collaborative work may lead to new internal projects	Number of participants who reported their organisation had already used the course to influence funding applications	3	Estimated cost of a managerial member of staff for 1 day to write an application	£140	Based on annual salary of £30,000	0%	5%	£359.10
			Better relationships with communities and vulnerable people	Number of participants who report they expect to forge better relationships with their communities and target groups	3	Cost of employing a PR expert for 1 day to develop a campaign	£600	Cost estimated at higher end of consultancy day rate	25%	5%	£1,282.50

Total Present Value (PV)	£10,674.19
Investment if course were paid for @ £275 per participant	£2,475.00
Social Return £ per £	4.31

Outcomes were derived from participant statements in interviews. Quantities relate to the number of interviewees who reported the outcome. Financial valuations were based on what stakeholders reported the value might be, by reference to another course or some other revealed preference proxy. The valuation then found from research was used to reflect the relative significance of outcomes, as interviewees reported them. Deadweight and attribution were based on interviewees' responses. It was assumed that the impact of the course did not endure beyond the period of the course, which would appear to be a very conservative assumption based on what participants reported.

Sensitivity analysis

As the ratio is an estimate of social return, the main assumptions were varied in accordance with the SROI Guide (www.thesroinetwork.org).

Item	Base case	New assumption	Base result	New result
Duration	1 year	2 years with 50% drop off	4.31	6.40
Deadweight	10% on average	30% on average	4.31	3.66
Attribution	5% on average	20% on average	4.31	3.63

This shows that the estimate of return ranges between £3 and £6, depending on how long-lasting the programme's impact is. This will be tracked over time.